

Strategies

- Enhance our Internet capabilities to provide a wide variety of information in a user-friendly format.
- Work with the tourism industry to develop web links between their sites and the division's sites.
- Evaluate the public's interest in publication of a Division of Wildlife Conservation newsletter or other ongoing communication vehicles describing division activities.
- Establish a method for the public to communicate with the division via the Internet, to augment existing methods of receiving feedback.
- Establish television and radio programs that provide information to a broad audience about division activities.
- Work closely with newspapers to provide them with useful and timely information.

Issue #2—Public Service:

In some parts of the state, it is difficult for the public to access licenses, tags, harvest tickets, permits, or bear and furbearer sealers, thereby making it difficult to comply with state regulatory requirements.

Direction

Continue to improve availability of licenses, tags, permits, harvest tickets, and sealing services throughout the state to facilitate regulatory compliance.

Strategies

- Provide the public with the most simple, clear, and user-friendly summary of hunting and trapping regulations possible.
- Provide information on regulations via our web site.
- Provide reliable and user-friendly access to electronic licensing and permitting transactions via the Internet.
- Provide adequate incentives and encourage business owners and other organizations in rural communities to become fur sealers and license vendors.

Human-Wildlife Conflicts

Alaska's human population continues to increase, resulting in the expansion of urban areas and changes in public attitudes towards wildlife. As a result, human-wildlife contacts and conflicts have increased. Many species have adapted and thrive in areas of high human population because of the abundance of food, cover, and the near-absence of predators. These changes create a multitude of economic, social, and safety issues.

Issue—Human-Wildlife Conflicts:

The division has too few staff to respond to the large and increasing numbers of nuisance animal calls. Relocating nuisance animals often serves to move problems to other areas or is generally ineffective because animals return to their original locations.

Direction

Increase the public's awareness and understanding of human-wildlife interactions and ways to avoid or minimize conflicts.

Strategies

- Provide technical assistance, educational opportunities, and practical options to the public to address wildlife conflicts.
- Foster cooperative efforts with local, state, and federal agencies, along with selected private entities, to help resolve and prevent human-wildlife conflicts.
- Work with local communities and municipalities to develop ordinances and long-range plans to address wildlife conflicts.
- Identify specific conflicts where additional staffing may be needed.
- Propose new legislation to allow private companies to be licensed to deal with some nuisance wildlife species.
- Encourage individuals and communities to dispose of garbage in a manner that avoids or minimizes wildlife attraction and conflicts.
- Use lethal removal where appropriate and necessary.



Photo courtesy of Steve DuBois

The Delta Junction bison herd provides wildlife watching and highly sought after hunting opportunities. Human-wildlife conflicts increased with the advent of large-scale grain farming. These were addressed by involving the public in developing the Delta Bison Management Plan.

Information Management

An important component of the division's Information Management program is to provide data and information to the public and division staff, and to administer permit hunts. Information Management also provides GIS-based data analyses and digital mapping capabilities to the division.

Issue—Information Management:

Advances in computer technology are occurring at a rapid pace, and the division must utilize these new advances to improve its public service and data management, and communicate these to staff and the public.

Direction

Incorporate new technology to enable data and information to be compiled, stored, and retrieved by staff and the public in an easy and timely manner.



Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Biologists fit Canada geese with leg and neck bands, and a few also get radio transmitters. These markers will aid in assessing population numbers.

Strategies

- Expand the division's capabilities to collect, compile, store, and retrieve harvest data and other information.
- Enhance the division's ability to provide timely data and information to staff and the public, using automation technology.
- Cooperate with staff and the public to identify specific informational needs, and communicate changes and technological advances to staff.

Regulatory Process

Alaska's fish and game regulatory process provides for public access and participation. This system is administered by the Department of Fish and Game's Boards Support Section, which supports the Boards of Fish and Game, along with numerous local Fish and Game Advisory Committees across the state. The division's role is to provide complete and timely biological information to Advisory Committees and the Board of Game, which is critical to their decision-making processes. Because division staff live in many communities throughout the state, they are often able to attend Advisory Committee meetings that Boards Support staff cannot.

Issue —Regulatory Process:

Advisory Committees sometimes encounter issues or problems associated with their functions and administration that are not effectively communicated to the Boards Support Section for resolution.

Direction

Offer support and assistance to the department's Boards Support Section.

Strategies

- When division staff become aware of issues or concerns associated with the function or administration of Advisory Committees, relay these to the Boards Support Section, and work cooperatively to help address and resolve them.
- Continue to provide complete and timely biological information to Advisory Committees and the Board of Game.

Subsistence/Dual Management

Both state and federal statutes provide a priority for subsistence use of wildlife in Alaska. Under federal law only rural residents are eligible for the priority. The Constitution of the State of Alaska provides that all Alaskan residents are eligible subsistence users under state law. This difference resulted in a federal takeover of subsistence management on all federal lands within Alaska in 1990. The federal government therefore regulates subsistence harvests on federal lands for rural residents while the Division of Wildlife Conservation continues to have the responsibility to manage wildlife for all users on all lands within Alaska. The result is a system of dual wildlife management on federal lands, with different state and federal regulations often applying to the same areas. Typically in the United States, states are responsible for wildlife management and it is the goal of the Department of Fish and Game to regain wildlife management authority. Numerous past efforts to resolve this issue by amending the state constitution and/or amending the federal statutes have been unsuccessful.

Issue —Subsistence/Dual Management:

Federal intervention into wildlife management has created a divisive and controversial issue. It has made the regulatory process much more costly and time consuming for the division, and continues to create confusion for hunters and trappers.

Direction

Work with all parties to return fish and wildlife management responsibility to the state. Until this occurs, work with the federal agencies and Federal Subsistence Board to insure the harvest of wildlife on federal lands does not exceed sustained yield, and work to minimize the confusion over regulations faced by hunters and other wildlife users.

Strategies

- Attend federal regional advisory council meetings, when it is in the state's best interest, to provide biological input and strengthen cooperative working relationships with the public, councils, and federal agency staff.
- Work with federal agencies to develop management protocols that will improve coordination of management efforts, reduce duplication of efforts by staff biologists, and minimize differences between state and federal regulations.



Photo courtesy of Randy Rogers

Elders discuss moose management at a Yukon Flats Moose Planning Committee meeting in Beaver.



Photo courtesy of Mike Wood

Fur skinning skills are taught to people of all ages at clinics sponsored by the division. Fur harvesting is often important to the subsistence way of life, as well as to other wildlife users. Careful handling of pelts preserves their usefulness and value.



Photo courtesy of Craig Flatten

Biologists fit a radio collar to a sedated wolf, and collect biological information. This tracking technology assists biologists in collecting information on wolf movements and populations.

Predator Management

Predator management has been one of the most controversial wildlife issues in Alaska for decades. Highly divergent public opinions are rooted in deeply held values, especially regarding population control of wolves.

Humans have the ability to influence natural systems by reducing predator populations and allowing ungulate (hoofed animal) populations to increase from depressed levels. Whether, when, or how it is appropriate for humans to decrease the number of predators—especially wolves—as a way to increase ungulate numbers for human harvest and use is controversial. This controversy is likely to persist, regardless of how much biological information is available. The division is professionally committed to continuing to move this controversy toward resolution for the benefit of all Alaskans.

Issue —Predator Management:

The public is deeply divided over how predators should be managed in Alaska and this has made it extremely difficult, expensive, and time consuming for the division to recommend or implement effective wildlife management programs that involve predator management.

Direction

Explore ways to increase ungulate populations within ecological constraints, and involve the public in developing effective wildlife management strategies that address predator management issues.

Strategies

- Identify and implement innovative methods for increasing ungulate productivity and survival rates, including active habitat management.
- Continue to conduct research on predator-prey relationships and identify new methods to reduce predation on ungulate populations.
- Work within Intensive Management guidelines established by state statutes and regulations to address the abundance of designated predator and prey populations.
- Apply rigorous standards of adaptive management, as defined and articulated in scientific literature, to advance our knowledge of the consequences and efficacy of specific management actions.
- Provide the public with accurate biological information about predator-prey relationships.
- Initiate collaborative public involvement processes to develop recommended actions for addressing specific predator-prey situations.
- Provide information to the public about wildlife relationships and interactions.

Public Involvement in Decision-Making

The division has increased its efforts to involve the public in wildlife management decision-making in response to growing public interest and the increasing social complexity of wildlife management issues. Public involvement can range from seeking public input on division proposals, to collaborative processes with high levels of public participation. The more complex or controversial the wildlife issues, the



Photo courtesy of Randy Rogers

A Yukon Flats Moose Planning Committee meeting in Chalkyitsik. The division sometimes convenes citizen's groups to help find solutions for difficult wildlife management issues.

greater the need for public participation. Decisions in which all stakeholders have a voice are more socially and politically durable than are those made unilaterally by the department.

Issue —Public Involvement:

Collaborative public involvement processes are necessary to address wildlife management issues in some cases, but are complex and expensive to administer.

Direction

Identify and prioritize management issues for which collaborative public involvement processes would be desirable.

Strategies

- Ensure that division staff receive adequate training to identify the need and processes for collaborative public involvement.
- Include Advisory Committee members in collaborative public involvement processes.
- Create a non-threatening environment for stakeholders that encourages involvement and a stronger sense of ownership and stewardship.
- Integrate both traditional and scientific knowledge into management decisions.
- Foster reciprocal education and improved information sharing between the division and the public.

Staffing and Organizational Development

Since its inception, the division has employed a highly trained and professional staff to manage and conserve Alaska's wildlife. Division programs and activities are generally developed and implemented at the area and regional levels, better enabling us to address local wildlife conservation issues. Staff presence in communities throughout Alaska allows us to establish close working relationships with the public and local governments and to give immediate attention to local issues.

The division is experiencing difficulty in retaining long-term biologists and recruiting qualified new ones. Compensation for biologists working for the state is no longer competitive with federal natural resource management agencies. Concurrently, the division requires a more diverse work force to meet the needs of broadened programs in wildlife education and wildlife viewing, along with the desires of the public to be more involved in wildlife management decisions.

Issue #1—Staffing and Organizational Development:

Difficulty in retaining biological staff and recruiting for qualified candidates for biologist positions is compromising the division's ability to develop and implement effective wildlife management programs.

Direction

Improve our ability to retain and recruit highly qualified professional staff.

Strategies

- Maintain a decentralized area and regional office organization.
- Develop methods to recognize and reward outstanding work performance.
- Provide opportunities for professional development and training.
- Create new job classifications in the areas of wildlife education, Internet web specialists, and project management, and insure existing job classifications provide opportunities for growth and advancement.
- Work with local high schools and universities to encourage student pursuits of degrees in resources management.
- Promote a competitive monetary compensation package comparable to other government resource management agencies.

Issue #2—Staffing and Organizational Development:

Staff involvement in division problem-solving and decision-making processes results in improved decisions, heightened morale, wide spread ownership, and better implementation.

Direction

Retain the division's participatory model for problem solving and decision-making.

Strategies

- Create and utilize staff work groups and task forces to address specific issues or problems affecting the division, its operations and deliverables, or Alaska's wildlife.
- Retain the Division Management Team (DMT) to work with the director on policy and operational decisions.

ADF&G (or department) – Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Direction (Program Goal) – A directional statement of intent describing what needs to be done to address an issue or opportunity. Tends to suggest solutions (strategies).

Division – ADF&G's Division of Wildlife Conservation.

Division Goal – A broad, directional statement of intent. A division goal supports the vision and mission statements; is realistic enough to inspire and challenge; and is suggestive of action and direction without specifying how.

DMT – Division Management Team: The upper-level leadership of the Division of Wildlife Conservation.

DNR – The Alaska Department of Natural Resources.

Furbearers – A group of animals noted for their quality fur, including beaver, mink, marten, river otters, foxes, wolverines, and other similar species.

GIS – Geographic Information System: A computer-based system of processing data and depicting it geographically.

GMU – Game Management Unit (see page 31).

Issue – A significant opportunity, problem, factor, or trend, or an internal or external challenge to the agency's mission, direction, policies, way of doing business, or culture. Issues should be clearly stated and understandable; serve as the foundation for future actions; and be specific enough to elicit ideas for solutions.

Nongame – Wildlife species that are not commonly hunted or trapped.

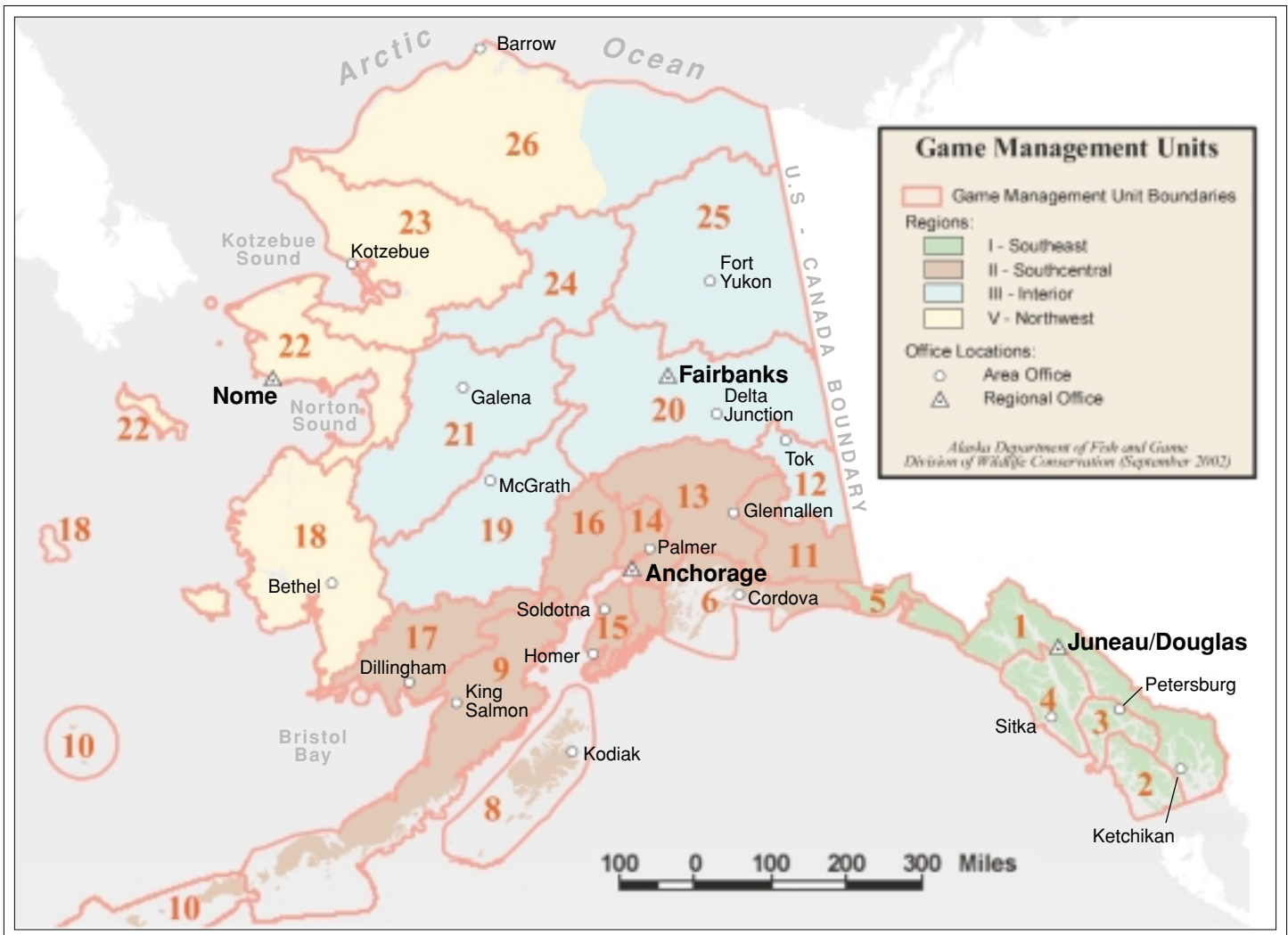
Sealing – The division's process of collecting biological information about harvested bears and furbearers, and placing a numbered plastic or metal locking tag on skulls and/or hides.

Strategy – Defines the methods or courses of action used to achieve a direction (program goal).



Photo courtesy of Steve Arthur

North Slope of the Brooks Range in summer.



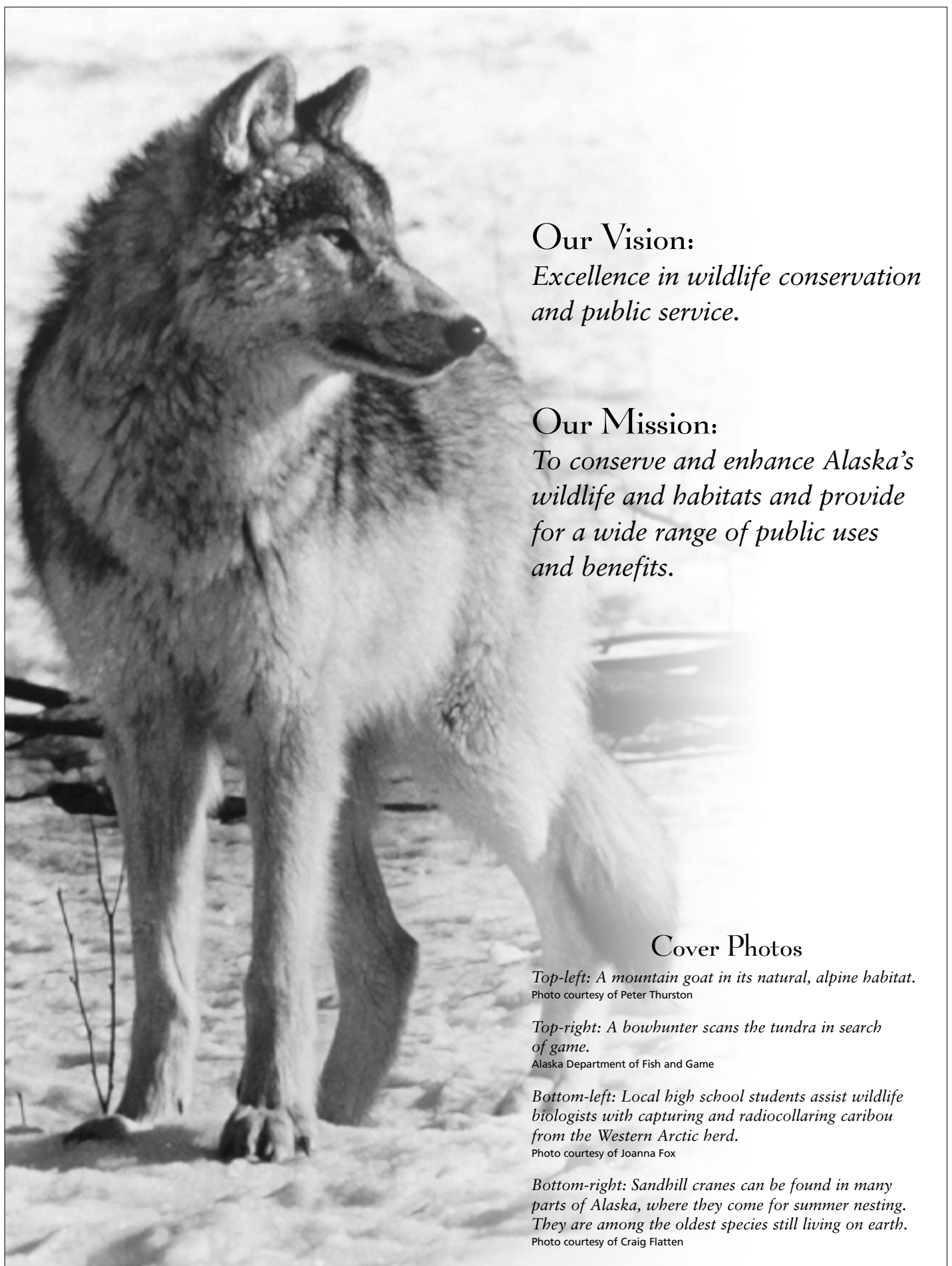
The Game Management Units, regions, and offices of the Division of Wildlife Conservation.

The Division of Wildlife Conservation has four regions: Southeast, Southcentral, Interior, and Northwest, with regional offices located in Douglas (Juneau), Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Nome. Area offices are located in 22 communities and the headquarters office is located in Juneau.

The State of Alaska is divided into 26 Game Management Units (GMUs) for regulatory purposes. Some GMUs are divided into subunits. GMU boundaries were established soon after statehood and were developed based on geographic and biological considerations. Many hunting and trapping regulations vary from one GMU to the next due to differences in the status and trends of wildlife populations.

Division of Wildlife Conservation Offices are located in the following communities, and can be reached at area code 907:

Anchorage.....267-2137	Galena656-1345	Kotzebue.....442-3420
Barrow.....852-3464	Glennallen.....822-3461	McGrath.....524-3323
Bethel.....543-2979	Homer235-8191	Nome.....443-2271
Cordova.....424-3215	Juneau.....465-4190	Palmer.....746-6300
Delta Junction.....895-4484	(Headquarters)	Petersburg.....772-3801
Dillingham.....842-2334	Ketchikan.....225-2475	Sitka.....747-5449
Douglas.....465-4265	King Salmon246-3340	Soldotna.....262-9368
Fairbanks.....459-7206	Kodiak486-1880	Tok883-2971



Our Vision:

Excellence in wildlife conservation and public service.

Our Mission:

To conserve and enhance Alaska's wildlife and habitats and provide for a wide range of public uses and benefits.

Cover Photos

Top-left: A mountain goat in its natural, alpine habitat.
Photo courtesy of Peter Thurston

Top-right: A bowhunter scans the tundra in search of game.
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Bottom-left: Local high school students assist wildlife biologists with capturing and radiocollaring caribou from the Western Arctic herd.
Photo courtesy of Joanna Fox

Bottom-right: Sandhill cranes can be found in many parts of Alaska, where they come for summer nesting. They are among the oldest species still living on earth.
Photo courtesy of Craig Flatten